

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MANILA

UNCLAS STATE 127175

E. O.11652: N/ A

TAGS: EAGS, ETRD, RP

SUBJ: RATTAN EMBARGO

1. FOLLOWING IS STATEMENT BY SENATOR TAFT APPEARING IN
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD JUNE 28:

2. QUOTE: MR. PRESIDENT, THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT HAS
RECENTLY DECIDED TO BAN EXPORTS OF RATTAN POLES AND
NARRA LOGS. THE BAN IS EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, EXCEPT THAT
EXISTING CONTRACTS WILL BE HONORED.

QUOTE I VIEW THIS ACTION AS HAVING EXTREMELY SERIOUS
CONSEQUENCES. AN EMBARGO ON EXPORTS IS JUST AS PROTECTION-
IST IN NATURE AS A HALT IN IMPORTS, WHICH WOULD BE MORE
IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED AS PROTECTIONIST BY MANY OBSERVERS.
IN THE CASE OF THE RECENT PHILIPPINE ACTION, THE INTERESTS
OF THE UNITED STATES ARE INVOLVED DIRECTLY, BECAUSE
THE UNITED STATES IMPORTS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS' WORTH OF
THE GOODS FALLING UNDER THE EMBARGO AND SEVERAL THOUSAND
JOBS IN THIS COUNTRY MAY BE AFFECTED.

QUOTE I REALIZE THAT THE DOMESTIC PRICE OF THE RATTAN
POLES AND NARRA LOGS, AS WELL AS THE POSSIBILITY THAT
THE INCREASED DEMAND RESULTING FROM FOREIGN CONSUMERS
WOULD EFFECT CONSERVATION, MUST BE CONSIDERED BY THE
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PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT. NEVERTHELESS, ACTION OF THIS TYPE

SHOULD ONLY BE CALLED FOR IN A QUITE SEVERE SITUATION.
FOR THAT REASON, I WAS RELUCTANT TO VOTE FOR EXPORT CONTROLS
ON OUR LOGS IN THE BANKING, HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE EVEN THOUGH SOME ESTIMATE THAT THE PRICE OF SOFT-
WOOD LOGS HAS RISEN 56 PERCENT DURING THE LAST 2 YEARS.
THE CONTROL MEASURE WHICH I FINALLY VOTED FOR WAS A SLIGHT
LIMITATION RATHER THAN AN ABSOLUTE EMBARGO.

QUOTE I HOPE THAT THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT WILL RECON-
SIDER THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE EXPORT BAN CAREFULLY. OF
COURSE, THAT GOVERNMENT MUST ALSO CONSIDER THE POSSIBLE
NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON FOREIGN TRADE OF THE EMBARGO ACTION. NOT
ONLY WILL THE INCOME FROM EXPORTING THE RATTAN POLES AND
NARRA LOGS IMMEDIATELY BE CUT OFF, BUT IT SEEMS POSSIBLE
TO ME AS WELL THAT THE GAINS WHICH THE PHILIPPINE PRODUCTS
HAVE ALREADY MADE IN THE AMERICAN MARKET MIGHT BE NULLIFIED
TO A GREAT EXTENT. UNQUOTE. ROGERS

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